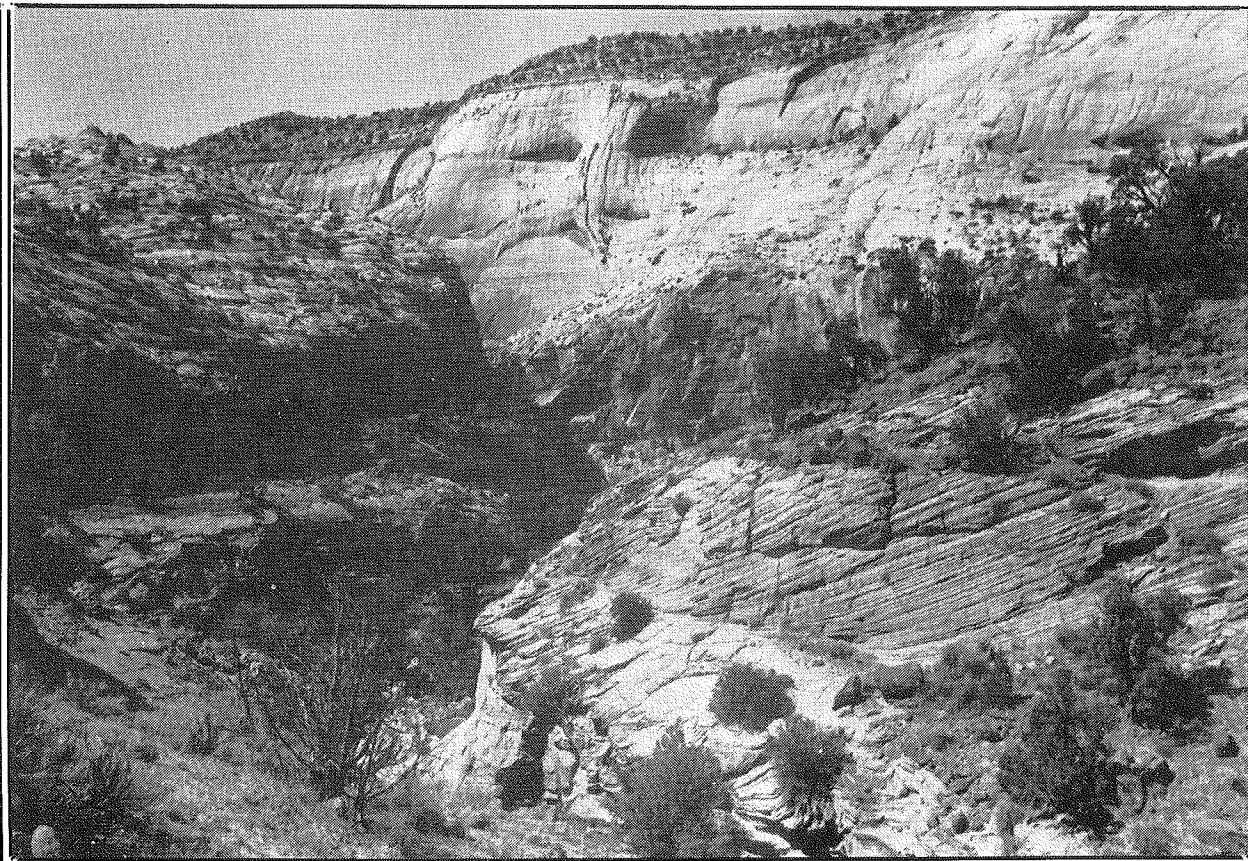
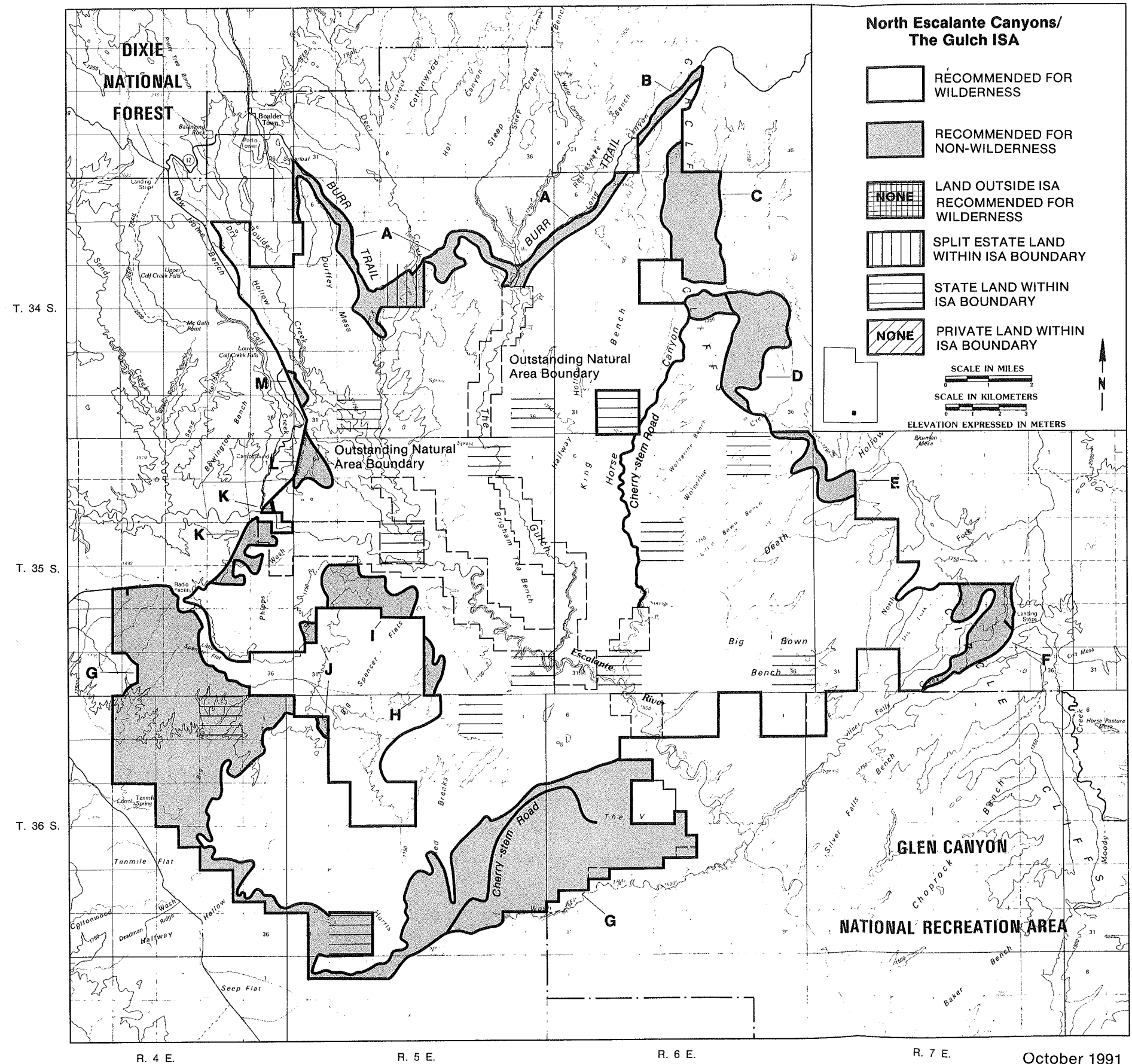


North Escalante Canyons/ The Gulch ISA



NORTH ESCALANTE CANYONS/THE GULCH ISA



NORTH ESCALANTE CANYONS/THE GULCH INSTANT STUDY AREA

1. THE STUDY AREA: 119,752 acres

The North Escalante/The Gulch Instant Study Area (ISA) is in eastern Garfield County, about 5 miles east of Escalante, Utah (population 652). The study area is irregularly shaped, more than 20 miles long from north to south and 20 miles wide from east to west. The ISA is adjacent to Glen Canyon National Recreation Area (GCNRA) to the southeast and is separated from the Steep Creek Wilderness Study Area (WSA) (UT-040-061) on the north by the Burr Trail, a road between Boulder and Capitol Reef National Park east of the ISA.

State Highway 12 divides the ISA from the Phipps-Death Hollow ISA, to the west (see Map). The ISA contains 119,752 acres of public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Twelve State sections (7,623 acres) and 452 acres of split-estate land (Federal surface and State-owned minerals) are in-held in the ISA (see Table 1). The portion of the ISA recommended for wilderness includes nine State sections (5,701 acres) but does not include the split-estate lands (see Appendix). The study area includes eight specially designated BLM areas totaling 13,195 acres.

TABLE 1
LAND STATUS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY IN THE STUDY AREA^a

WITHIN THE ISA	ACRES
BLM (surface and subsurface)	119,752
Split-Estate (BLM surface only) ^b	452
In-holdings (State, Private)	7,623
Total	127,827
WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED WILDERNESS BOUNDARY	
BLM (within the ISA)	91,558
BLM (outside the ISA)	0
Split-Estate (within the ISA)	0
Split-Estate (outside the ISA)	0
Total BLM land recommended for wilderness	91,558
In-holdings (State, private)	5,701
WITHIN THE AREA NOT RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS	
BLM	28,194
Split-Estate	452
Total BLM land not recommended for wilderness	28,646
In-holdings (State, Private)	1,922

Source: BLM File Data

^a The Appendix is a detailed table of in-holdings and/or split-estate tracts included within the portion of the ISA recommended for designation.

^b In this report, split-estate lands are defined as only those lands with Federal surface and non-Federal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have Federal minerals but non-Federal surface are classified according to the owner of the surface.

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Most of the ISA is characterized by plateaus or benches and canyons. The Escalante River has cut a deep, winding canyon from west to east through the ISA. Elevations range from about 4,800 feet on the Escalante River at the southeast corner of the ISA to about 6,800 feet atop King Bench in the northeastern part of the study area. Pinyon-juniper is the most common vegetative type, but about 20 percent of the ISA is barren or has sparse vegetative cover.

The ISA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) finalized in November 1990. Four alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a partial wilderness alternative where 91,558 acres would be designated as wilderness and 28,194 acres would be released for uses other than wilderness, which is the recommendation in this report; a no wilderness (no action) alternative; a smaller partial wilderness alternative of 54,500 acres; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. RECOMMENDATION AND RATIONALE:

- 91,558 acres
(recommended for wilderness)
- 28,194 acres
(recommended for nonwilderness)

The recommendation for this ISA is to designate 91,558 acres as wilderness and to release the remaining 28,194 acres for uses other than wilderness (see Map). Designation of the entire area as wilderness is considered to be the environmentally preferable alternative as it would result in the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The alternative selected, however, would be implemented in a manner which would utilize all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

All of the ISA is in a natural state. Approximately 89 percent of the outstanding opportunities for solitude in the ISA are included within the recommended area. Approximately 91 percent of the ISA's outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation are in the area recommended for designation. About 11 percent (10,082 acres) of the area rec-

ommended for wilderness was identified in 1970 as part or all of four BLM Outstanding Natural Areas (ONAs). About 22 percent of the entire ISA has been closed to off-road vehicle (ORV) use. All of the major canyon and bench systems tributary to the Escalante River are recommended for wilderness. Canyons include Boulder Creek, Deer Creek, The Gulch, Wolverine Canyon, Little Death Hollow, Harris Wash and Phipps Wash. Major benches and upland areas include King Bench, Brigham Tea Bench, Durfey Mesa, Wolverine Bench, Little Bown Bench, Big Bown Bench, the Red Breaks, and the Bighorn. Other important features included in the recommended portion are the western escarpment of the Circle Cliffs and the mainstem Escalante River and its canyon. Within the area recommended for designation, wilderness values outweigh mineral or other competing values.

Areas not recommended for designation as wilderness are along the perimeters of the ISA. Areas A and B along the northern Burr Tail Road boundary are not recommended for designation in order to preserve development options for transportation, utility, campground, and scenic overlooks and to allow for back-packer parking and trailhead access to the backcountry of the area recommended for designation. Trailhead parking for the heavily used Deer Creek and The Gulch backpacking routes to the Escalante River are adjacent to the Burr Trail Road.

Other areas not recommended for designation possess opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation that generally are not comparable to the outstanding opportunities found in the area recommended for designation. Less than 15 percent of the nonwilderness perimeter areas exhibits outstanding opportunities. Approximately 90 percent of both the solitude and primitive recreation opportunities in the recommended area are considered by the wilderness inventory to be of outstanding quality.

Areas C, D, E, and F along the eastern perimeter of the ISA are all east of the Circle Cliffs escarpment and the rugged benches behind that escarpment. These four areas are flatter, more open and less spectacular than the recommended

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area immediately to the west. In addition, there are some intrusions from previous uranium exploration, although the areas meet the inventory criteria for naturalness.

Area G along the southern and western perimeter includes the V flat and the upper portion of Harris Wash lacking canyon entrenchment. The Area G locations are not comparable to the Harris Wash Canyon, the Bighorn, the Red Breaks, and the spectacular slickrock domes above the Escalante River that form the Area G boundary to the recommended portion. Areas H, I, and J are extensions of the Big Spencer Flats located outside on the ISA boundary. These portions of Big Spencer Flats abut the scenic canyons and slickrock areas within the recommended area such as Phipps Wash, the Escalante river, and the unnamed slickrock domes above the river.

Areas K, L, and M are the flat areas along Utah Scenic Byway 12 and are adjacent to areas in the recommended portion of the ISA such as the Escalante River Canyon, the Phipps Wash Canyon, Phipps Arch, and the slickrock rim areas of the Dry Hollow Canyon fork of the Boulder Creek Canyon. Almost all such available flat areas along Scenic Byway 12 are used for informal parking by tourist sightseers, hikers, and backpackers to the Phipps-Death Hollow and North Escalante Canyons/The Gulch ISAs. Area K is critical to the provision of trailhead parking and overnight facilities for backpackers entering the ISA on the Escalante River and Phipps Wash Canyons routes. Areas K, L, and M are recommended for nondesignation to insure that the adjacent portion recommended for wilderness can be accessed by wilderness users and safely viewed as wilderness by sightseers.

3. CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN DEVELOPING THE WILDERNESS RECOMMENDATION

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

Naturalness is defined as an attribute in which the evidence of man is substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor and where minor imprints of man ex-

hibit no cumulative impact that is substantially noticeable. The ISA represents the largest block of undisturbed BLM lands on the midsection of the Escalante River Canyons system and along the western rim of the Circle Cliffs. Because the canyons system is extensive and well-watered, it has a high utility for hiking and overnight backpacking. Most of the naturalness attributes of the ISA are accessible to and visited by backcountry users. The naturalness characteristic is of very high quality and is enhanced by the high scenic values. The imprints of man which remain within the ISA are visible in less than 1 percent of the ISA. They include 5 miles of ways, four cabins with corrals, and numerous livestock improvements. Approximately 600 acres show evidence of man's imprints.

Since 1980, approximately 1 to 2 acres of the ISA has been disturbed. This disturbance resulted from two actions: (1) the construction of the Big Horn/Upper Cattle division fence during 1984. This project consists of three separate fences of 200-foot, 3,000-foot and 3,400-foot lengths. The fences are substantially unnoticeable and do not impair the wilderness values, and (2) construction of 600 feet of irrigation pipeline onto private land during 1984. Both construction projects have been reclaimed so that impacts are substantially unnoticeable. No additional imprints have occurred in the ISA.

B. Solitude

Approximately 75 percent of the ISA has outstanding opportunities for solitude. The terrain and vegetation enables visitors to find seclusion in most of the ISA. The size of the ISA enhances opportunities for solitude. The configuration of the ISA neither enhances nor detracts from the opportunities for solitude.

A sense of isolation in all of the major canyons provides an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The canyons vary considerably in shape and appearance. Some canyons, such as the Escalante River, Phipps Wash, and Horse Canyon, have vertical walls and many bends and meanders. Other canyons, such as The Gulch, Harris Wash, and upper Deer Creek have more rounded walls with numerous bends.

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Boulder Creek, Dry Hollow, and lower Deer Creek are deep V-shaped canyons. The confluence area of Boulder and Deer Creek is one of the most convoluted and dissected sandstone areas in the ISA. Lower Wolverine Canyon and Little Death Hollow are entrenched meanders with sections of narrows. All of these features provide screening that isolates visitors from each other. Vegetative screening enhances the opportunity for solitude in the Boulder Creek, Dry Fork, lower Deer Creek, and The Gulch Canyons. The Escalante River Canyon also possess vegetative screening.

The exceptions, when canyons do not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude, are the upper ends of Horse Canyon, Wolverine Canyon, Little Death Hollow, and Silver Falls Canyon as they emerge from the Circle Cliffs. At this point, these canyons are broad open valleys between buttes and, consequently, do not provide screening.

The larger benches in the ISA such as King Bench, Big Bown Bench, Little Bown Bench, Brigham Tea Bench, and Wolverine Bench are isolated by surrounding cliffs or canyons. Isolation is even more pronounced on the smaller mesas and benches such as Durffey Mesa, Red Breaks, and the mesas east of Big Horn. Many of the benches possess rough or dissected interiors that offer excellent topographic screening. Wolverine Bench, Little Bown Bench, the Upper Halfway Hollow section of King Bench, and the eastern end of Big Bown Bench are examples. Some areas in the interiors of the three largest benches (Brigham Tea, King, and Big Bown Benches) are open and flat and provide a less than outstanding opportunity for solitude.

Other landforms within the ISA cannot be classified as benches or canyons. These areas include the "V" Flat, the dissected sandstone area between the upper Gulch and Deer Creek, the massive sandstone outcrops northeast of the Red Breaks, and the Chinle exposures at the bottom of the Circle Cliffs. With the exception of the "V" and the Chinle slopes, these areas all provide outstanding opportunities for solitude due to screening by terrain. In the "V", topographic screening is effective only in the small scattered slickrock areas,

and on the Chinle slopes, only in the more dissected and gullied areas at the base of the Circle Cliffs.

Outside sights and sounds are an insignificant influence on solitude at present. It would be easy for a visitor to find seclusion in most of the canyons of the ISA. The user can also easily find seclusion on all but the interiors of the Brigham Tea, King, and Big Bown Benches of the ISA because of the isolating effect of the surrounding cliffs or canyons.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The primitive recreation opportunities on 94,604 acres or 79 percent of the ISA meet the criterion for outstanding for lands under wilderness review.

The ISA has eight recreational opportunities of outstanding quality. It provides outstanding opportunities for activities such as camping, backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, photography, and sightseeing for geological, historical, and archaeological features. In general, the places where opportunities for camping, backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, photography, and sightseeing for geological, historical, and archaeological features are outstanding are all within the best backpacking areas.

Various intrinsic characteristics of the ISA enhance the opportunity for backpacking. The ISA contains a variety of superb scenery, many water sources conducive to extended trips and a riparian canyon vegetation which is a scenic feature not commonly found in the canyon country.

The configuration of the canyon system is a major factor influencing the quality of the backpacking. The canyons tributary to the central Escalante River Canyon form a dendritic pattern that provides a variety of routes to and from the river. Although the Escalante River and several other canyons are probably the major objectives of current backpacking use, the benches are also a destination. Several benches, such as King Bench, are sufficiently large to provide a backpacking experience of several nights' duration. Benches such as Little

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Bown and Big Bown provide scenery and solitude. Benches and certain other areas outside the canyons also can be used as travel routes to the Escalante River or between other canyons. Examples include the route across King Bench from The Gulch to Horse Canyon, the route across Big Bown Bench from Horse Canyon to either Silver Falls Canyon or the Escalante River, and the route from Big Spencer Flats to the Escalante River Canyon and Sheffield Bend.

Sightseeing for geological features is of excellent quality in the Wolverine Petrified Wood Natural Environment Area. This area is not considered outstanding for backpacking.

D. Special Features

The ISA is a large and geographically complex area associated with that section of the Escalante River Canyon between the Glen Canyon NRA and the highway between Boulder and Escalante, Utah. The area has some of the most outstanding scenery in the country. The scenic values are correlated to landforms in the ISA; to understand the quality of this special feature, the topographic character of the ISA should be understood.

East of Horse Canyon in the eastern portion of the ISA, canyons draining to Horse Canyon through the Circle Cliffs escarpment have created a unique canyon and bench system. Four canyons (Horse, Wolverine, Little Death Hollow, and Silver Falls) have isolated 10 benches of varying size including the named Wolverine, Little Bown, and Big Bown Benches. Wolverine Canyon and Little Death Hollow possess extremely narrow and convoluted sections, but the most distinctive topographic feature is the surface of the benches. Many of the bench tops exhibit an intricate pattern of innumerable orange-red Kayenta Sandstone knobs. The east face of King Bench also possesses this feature.

In the north-central portion of the ISA, another distinctive area of topographic character is evident. This area is dominated by King Bench, which is the largest bench in the ISA. The much smaller Brigham Tea Bench is also characteristic of the area. The Gulch ONA with its per-

ennial stream is located in the western portion of the area. King Bench is a rough isolated bench wholly within the ISA. For the most part, King Bench and Brigham Tea Bench lack the extensive Navajo or Kayenta Sandstone Formations and exposures characteristic of other sections of the ISA.

The northwestern section is an extremely dissected rugged area. It includes the canyons of the Escalante River, Deer Creek, Dry Hollow, and Boulder Creek. Durffey Mesa is a prominent isolated mesa which, in places, rises 600 feet above Deer Creek and Boulder Creek. With the exception of portions of Haymaker Bench, most of this section is characterized by a yellow-white Navajo Sandstone exposed as cliffs, domes, and canyon walls.

Several distinctive landforms surround Big Spencer Flats in the southwestern portion of the ISA. The Phipps Wash area contains Phipps Wash Canyon draining to the Escalante River and benches with extensive rock outcropping on either side of the canyon.

The Harris Wash area southwest of Big Spencer Flats contains the canyon of Harris Wash and several tributary canyons such as Big Horn, draining Big and Little Spencer Flats. South of Big Spencer Flats, the area changes to a rough sand and slickrock region cut by short canyons. Large sand dunes are present below the small, isolated buttes east of Big Horn. Navajo Sandstone domes and peaks are present in this area. Harris Wash is a canyon of the classic Escalante River drainage canyon form with many entrenched meanders in the Navajo Sandstone.

The Red Breaks southeast of Big Spencer Flats is a colorful dissected area in the Carmel Formation. The Red Breaks are bounded on the west by a Navajo Sandstone escarpment. A large canyon draining to Harris Wash bisects the Red Breaks and cuts into the underlying Navajo Sandstone. To the northeast, the Red Breaks are replaced by one of the most extensive Navajo Sandstone areas in the ISA. The Navajo forms massive domes, peaks, and mesas and extends to the rim of the Escalante River Canyon. From the mouth of Boulder Creek to The Gulch,

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several short side canyons enter the river from this sandstone area.

The Navajo Sandstone area and the Red Breaks are bounded on the east by the "V" flat created by the intersection of the Harris Wash and Escalante River Canyons.

The "V" lacks relief and is characterized by a patchwork pattern of open sandy soil areas and slickrock. Several sand dune areas are present. In total, approximately 81,000 acres of the ISA possess scenic values of significance.

The ISA possesses numerous archaeological sites. A historical site of significance is the Old Boulder Road, which was the main route between Escalante and Boulder, Utah.

The ISA has resource values that, although not identified as such during the wilderness inventory, could be considered special features. There are two animal species (peregrine falcon and bald eagle) listed as endangered that may occasionally use the ISA.

There are seven animal species and nine plant species that are considered sensitive that may occur in the ISA. The ISA has small populations of cougar and elk which are wildlife species associated with wilderness.

Refer to Appendix 4 and the Affected Environment, Vegetation and Wildlife Including Special Status Species sections of the Utah BLM Statewide Wilderness Final EIS for additional information. Approximately 43 percent (51,752 acres) of the ISA is rated Class A for scenic quality. It has approximately 42.4 miles of perennial streams.

The Escalante River through the ISA is part of a longer segment nominated for study under Section 5(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on September 11, 1970. There are four arches found in the ISA.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS)

A. Expanding the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

Wilderness designation of this ISA would add a combination of potential natural vegetation (PNV) ecosystems not presently represented in Utah or in the NWPS.

PNV is the vegetative type that would eventually become climax vegetation if not altered by human interference. It is not necessarily the vegetation that is currently present in an area.

The ISA is in the Colorado Plateau Province/Ecoregion. The PNV types in the ISA are juniper-pinyon woodland (79,192 acres), galleta-threeawn shrubsteppe (27,160 acres), and saltbush-greasewood (13,400 acres). Juniper-pinyon woodland and saltbush-greasewood are represented in the NWPS nationally and in Utah and in other BLM study areas both in and outside of Utah. Galleta-threeawn shrubsteppe is present in BLM study areas but is not represented in the NWPS.

Adding the North Escalante Canyons/The Gulch ISA Complex to the NWPS would expand the diversity of natural systems by adding a PNV type (galleta-threeawn shrubsteppe) and a combination of ecosystems not now represented in the NWPS.

This information is summarized in Table 2 from data compiled in December 1989.

B. Assessing the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation within a Days Driving Time (5 Hours) of Major Population Centers

The ISA is not within a 5-hour drive of any major population center.

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

The North Escalante Canyons/The Gulch ISA would not contribute significantly to balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas within the NWPS.

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TABLE 2
ECOSYSTEM REPRESENTATION

BAILEY-KUCHLER CLASSIFICATION (PNV)	NWPS AREAS		OTHER BLM STUDIES	
	AREAS	ACRES	AREAS	ACRES
NATIONWIDE (COLORADO PLATEAU PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	11	1,401,745	84	2,064,813
Galleta-Threeawn Shrubsteppe	0	0	10	163,566
Saltbush-Greasewood	1	20,000	17	380,603
UTAH (COLORADO PLATEAU PROVINCE)				
Juniper-Pinyon Woodland	1	26,000	53	1,627,006
Galleta-Threeawn Shrubsteppe	0	0	10	163,566
Saltbush-Greasewood	1	20,000	17	380,603

Source: BLM File Data.

As of January 1987 the NWPS included 64 areas comprising 2,834,115 acres in Utah and Arizona. In a clockwise direction within 100 miles of the ISA, beginning to the north, are the 26,000-acre Box-Death Hollow Wilderness (Forest Service [FS]), the 45,000-acre Dark Canyon Wilderness (FS), the 110,000-acre Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness (BLM), and to the northwest, the 7,000-acre Ashdown Gorge Wilderness (FS).

Manageability (The area must be capable of being managed effectively to preserve its wilderness character.)

The entire ISA, including the portion recommended for wilderness designation can reasonably be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. There are 12 sections (7,623 acres) of full-estate State land and 452 acres of split-estate land with Federal surface and State minerals in the ISA. Of these, nine sections (5,701 acres) are in the area recommended for wilderness. The remaining 1,921 acres of full-estate and all of the split-estate land are in the part of the ISA not recommended for wilderness designation.

All of the in-held State lands are under lease for grazing and 2,557 acres are leased for oil, gas, and hydrocarbons.

Grazing is presently the only use on in-held State land.

It is projected that in the foreseeable future only 6 acres of the ISA would be disturbed by construction of access to roads to State sections for mineral exploration purposes. Four of the 6 acres are in the recommended part of the ISA and 2 acres are in the part not recommended for wilderness. Development is not projected following exploration. Therefore, the presence of State lands would not significantly affect the overall manageability of the ISA.

There are approximately 26 existing mining claims in the recommended area and 40 in the area not recommended for wilderness designation. Limited exploration of these claims is projected in the foreseeable future but development is not expected.

There are approximately 8,600 acres of post-FLPMA and 4,280 acres of pre-FLPMA leases in the ISA. Of these, 6,820 acres of post-FLPMA and 3,380 acres of pre-FLPMA leases are in the part of the ISA recommended for wilderness. About 8,960 acres of the leases in the recommended part of the ISA are under combined hydrocarbon lease application. If

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granted, these leases would contain non-impairment stipulations limiting development to a manner not degrading to wilderness values. Development is not expected in the foreseeable future on any of the leases in the ISA.

Energy and Mineral Resource Values

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM) studied the mineral values of the ISA in 1981. The report indicated that locatable minerals such as uranium, copper, and gold may occur but in small, low-grade deposits. Oil and gas and gypsum deposits are also thought to be small or not viable for economic extraction (USGS Open File Report 81-558, 1981). Analysis of the area by BLM geologists indicated that the potential for oil and gas energy mineral resources is low. Wells drilled near the ISA have not had promising showings and the geologic structure of the ISA is not particularly favorable. The potential for coal reserves is low and the coal-bearing formations in the nearby Kaiparowits coal field are absent in the ISA. No hot springs are known in the area and regional subsurface heat flow is low. Consequently, the potential for geothermal resources is also low.

The potential for undiscovered uranium deposits is moderate. Part of the ISA is within an area considered to have high potential. The remainder of the study area is considered to be favorable for small deposits of uranium. As the occurrence of copper is usually associated with uranium mineralization, the ISA is considered to have moderate potential for small deposits of copper.

Gravel and other rock material usable in construction occur in the ISA, but these deposits are not unique nor economically significant because the ISA is not near centers of likely use and such materials exist elsewhere in the vicinity.

Impacts on Resources

Table 3 summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for alternatives considered including designation or non-designation of the area as wilderness.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered to be significant issues in the EIS.

Summary of ISA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Comments received during the early stages of the EIS preparation were used to develop significant study issues and alternatives for the ultimate management of the ISA.

During formal public review of the Draft EIS, a total of 178 inputs specifically addressing this ISA were received from 717 commenters, including oral statements received at 17 public hearings on the EIS. Each letter or oral testimony was considered to be one input. Duplicate letters or oral statement by the same commenter were not counted as additional inputs or signatures. Each individual was credited with one signature or testimony regardless of the number of inputs.

In general, 397 commenters supported wilderness designation for part or all of the ISA, while 311 commenters were opposed. Nine commenters addressed the relative merits of the EIS, but took no formal position on wilderness designation.

Those favoring wilderness commented on adding the diversity in the ISA to the NWPS and the significance of wilderness protection. The majority of those commenting in favor of wilderness were from other states.

Those opposing wilderness were concerned that wilderness would conflict with or preclude mineral exploration and development, livestock operations, flood control and water rights, public access, or other uses; is not compatible with multiple use; would harm State and local economies; and that designation is not necessary to protect the ISA. The great majority of those opposed were from rural Utah.

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Two Federal agencies, the NPS and USBM commented on the Draft EIS. The USBM commented that BLM had understated the petroleum potential of the ISA. The NPS noted that it favored the All Wilderness Alternative for the ISA.

No comment letters were received on the Final EIS.

There are twelve sections (7,623 acres) of State land and 452 acres of split-estate land of Federal surface and State minerals in the ISA. In commenting on the Draft EIS the State of Utah expressed general opposition to wilderness designation but did not take a definite position regarding wilderness designation of the ISA. The State noted that the area possesses the highest of wilderness values because of the Escalante River system, but also has significant conflicts with mineral and livestock management.

The Garfield County Master Plan of 1984 recommends that 53,447 acres of the North Escalante Canyons/The Gulch ISA be designated wilderness. Regardless of the master plan, the Garfield County Commission is opposed to wilderness designation of the ISA and has endorsed the Consolidated Local Government Response to Wilderness that opposes wilderness designation for BLM lands in Utah.

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Table 3
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternatives

Resource	Alternatives		
	Recommendation Large Partial Wilderness (91,558 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness (119,752 Acres)	Small Partial Wilderness (54,500 Acres)
Impacts on Wilderness Values	<p>Wilderness values would be preserved overall in the designated area which is approximately 76 percent of the ISA. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be directly lost on 60 acres and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be indirectly reduced in quality on up to an additional 7,185 acres of the ISA. The impact would be due to mineral exploration, providing access to State in-holdings, rangeland projects, improved ORV use of the Burr Trail, and continued ORV use of the "V" and Spenser Flats areas. Most of the impact would be in the nondesignated area. Special features, including most of the scenic and geologic values, all perennial waters, and most archaeological and historical features, would be preserved in the designated area. Some Class A scenery would be reduced in quality by surface disturbance. Vehicular use of 1 mile of way and future access and exploration roads in the nondesignated portion would detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the ISA. This alternative would complement and enhance wilderness uses, values, and management of the contiguous NRA.</p>	<p>Wilderness values would not be protected by wilderness designation and loss would occur as intrusions increase. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be directly lost on 104 acres of the ISA and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be reduced in quality on up to an additional 11,975 acres. This impact would be due to mineral exploration, providing access to the State in-holdings, rangeland projects, improved ORV use of the Burr Trail and continued ORV use of the "V" and Spenser Flats areas. Some Class A scenery could be reduced in quality in disturbed areas. Also, over the long term, water flow in the Escalante River could change due to upstream appropriations. Vehicular use of 5 miles of existing ways and future access and exploration roads would occasionally detract from opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the ISA. This alternative would not complement and enhance wilderness values, uses, and management of the contiguous NRA which is proposed for wilderness designation by the NPS.</p>	<p>Wilderness designation would preserve overall the wilderness values in the ISA. In the foreseeable future, naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be directly lost on 46 acres and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be indirectly reduced in quality on up to an additional 3,593 acres. This impact would be due to mineral exploration, rangeland projects, and improvement of the Burr Trail. Special features including the wild and scenic qualities of the Escalante River would be preserved overall, although some Class A scenery might be reduced in quality because of disturbance. This alternative would complement and enhance wilderness uses, values, and management of the contiguous NRA which is proposed by the NPS for wilderness designation.</p>

NORTH ESCALANTE CANYON/THE GULCH ISA

Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternatives

Resource	Alternatives		
	Recommendation Large Partial Wilderness (91,558 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness (119,752 Acres)	Small Partial Wilderness (54,500 Acres)
Impacts on Vegetation	<p>Vegetation types would not be significantly affected by implementation of this alternative because of 0.05 percent of the ISA (60 acres) would be disturbed. There would not be significant impacts to special status plant populations from mineral access, BLM-initiated activities, Burr Trail realignment, or ORV use, because of required mitigation and continued monitoring and management actions.</p>	<p>Vegetation types would not be significantly affected by implementation of the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative because only 0.09 percent (104 acres) of the ISA would be disturbed. There would be no significant impacts to special status plant populations from mineral access, BLM-initiated activities, Burr Trail realignment, or ORV use because of required mitigation and continued monitoring and management actions.</p>	<p>The impacts for this alternative would be essentially the same as for the Large Partial Wilderness Alternative because the potential disturbance is only 2 acres more with this alternative and the same area would be available for ORV use.</p>
Impacts on Water Resources	<p>In the short term, this partial wilderness designation would not significantly alter water quality or uses. In the long term, future water diversions and new consumptive uses in the Escalante River system upstream of the ISA may be restricted or precluded.</p>	<p>In the short term, wilderness designation would not significantly alter water quality or uses. In the long term, future water diversions and new consumptive uses in the Escalante River system upstream of the ISA may be restricted or precluded.</p>	<p>In the short term, this small partial wilderness designation would not significantly alter water quality or uses. In the long term, future water diversions and new consumptive uses in the Escalante River system upstream of the ISA may be restricted or precluded.</p>

NORTH ESCALANTE CANYON/THE GULCH ISA

Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternatives

Recommendation		Alternatives		
Resource	Large Partial Wilderness (91,558 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness	All Wilderness (119,752 Acres)	Small Partial Wilderness (54,500 Acres)
Impacts on Mineral and Energy Exploration and Production	With this alternative partial wilderness would limit potential exploration and development opportunities for minerals that may occur in the designated portion (76 percent) of the ISA to those areas under lease or mining claim at the time of designation. However, no significant locatable or leasable mineral production would be foregone because there is a low probability of development even if a portion of the ISA is not designated wilderness.	Implementation of the No Action/No Wilderness Alternative would not limit energy and mineral exploration and development beyond the limitations which are already in effect. Mineral leasing, location of mining claims, and mineral development would continue as at present.	Wilderness designation would limit potential exploration and development opportunities for minerals that may occur in the ISA to those areas under lease or mining claim at the time of designation. However, no significant locatable or leasable mineral production would be foregone because there is a low probability of development even if the ISA is not designated wilderness.	With this alternative partial wilderness would limit potential exploration and development opportunities for minerals that may occur in the designated portion (46 percent) of the ISA to those areas under lease or mining claim at the time of designation. However, no significant locatable or leasable mineral production would be foregone because there is a low probability of development even if a portion of the ISA is not designated wilderness.
	Cultural resources including 43 recorded sites would receive protection from wilderness designation with this alternative. Sites in the nondesignated portion would continue to receive protection under existing laws but some inadvertent loss or damage to cultural sites due to locatable mineral exploration and ORV activity could occur. The likelihood of significant damage or loss is minimal.	Some impacts to cultural resources including 60 recorded sites would result with this alternative. Some inadvertent loss or damage to archaeological sites as well as intentional vandalism due to increased accessibility may occur, but would probably be minimal. Cultural resource management would continue without regard to wilderness management.	The benefits of protection of cultural resources including 60 recorded sites from most surface disturbance and all vehicular access would outweigh adverse effects from increased future recreational use. Management of cultural resources could be restricted in order to protect other wilderness values.	Cultural resources, including 37 recorded sites would receive protection as a result of wilderness designation with this alternative. All sites in the nondesignated area would continue to be protected by existing laws.

NORTH ESCALANTE CANYON/THE GULCH ISA

Table 3 (Continued)
Comparative Summary of Impacts by Alternatives

Resource	Alternatives			
	Recommendation Large Partial Wilderness (91,558 Acres)	No Action/No Wilderness	All Wilderness (119,752 Acres)	Small Partial Wilderness (54,500 Acres)
Impacts on Recreation	<p>The quality of primitive recreational opportunities would be preserved overall in the designated area. The quality of the primitive opportunity would be directly reduced on 60 acres and indirectly reduced on up to 7,185 acres. Both primitive and motorized recreational use would increase. Vehicular recreational use would be less than 4 percent of the total use.</p>	<p>The quality of primitive recreation would be directly reduced on 104 acres and indirectly reduced on about 11,975 acres. Both primitive and motorized recreation use would increase but vehicular use would comprise no more than 4 percent of the total.</p>	<p>The All Wilderness Alternative would preserve primitive recreation opportunities overall by reducing the likelihood for surface-disturbing activities and increasing management attention and recognition of recreational values. Primitive recreational values would be reduced in quality directly on 46 acres and indirectly on up to 3,593 acres of the ISA due to valid existing rights. ORV use would be precluded but primitive use would increase.</p>	<p>The quality of primitive recreational opportunities would be preserved overall in the designated area. The quality of the primitive opportunity would be directly reduced on 67 acres and indirectly reduced on up to 7,185 acres. Both primitive and motorized recreational use would increase. Vehicular recreational use would be no more than 4 percent of the total use.</p>

NORTH ESCALANTE CANYONS/THE GULCH INSTANT STUDY AREA

Appendix
Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Non-Federal Holdings Within Areas Recommended for Designation ^a

Legal Description (Prior to any Subdivision)	Total Acreage	Number of Owners (If Parcel has been subdivided)	Type of Ownership by Estate (Federal, State, Private, Other) (Surface Estate) (Subsurface Estate)	Presently Proposed for Acquisition (Yes, No)	Preferred Method of Acquisition (Purchase, Exchange, Other)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition (Land Costs)	Estimated Cost of Acquisition (Processing Costs)
T. 34 S., R. 5 E., Sec. 32	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 34 S., R. 5 E., Sec. 36	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 35 S., R. 5 E., Sec. 2	584.76		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 35 S., R. 5 E., Sec. 16	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 35 S., R. 5 E., Sec. 36	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 35 S., R. 6 E., Sec. 2	639.79		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 35 S., R. 6 E., Sec. 16	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 35 S., R. 6 E., Sec. 32	640.00		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000
T. 36 S., R. 5 E., Sec. 2	636.48		State	No	Exchange		\$2,000

^a The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a Federal appraised value of the land or mineral estate, but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring non-Federal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.